

Senate Armed Services Committee - McNamara Briefing 23 JAN 67
Approved For Release 2004/03/15 : CIA-RDP69B00369R000100200120-0

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(190) MCNAMARA-MISSILE DEFENSE

I WASHINGTON, JAN. 24 (AP)-SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT S. MCNAMARA SAID TODAY THIS COUNTRY DOES "NOT INTEND TO PRODUCE OR DEPLOY" AN ANTI-MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM IF SOVIET RUSSIA AGREES TO AVOID A RACE IN THIS FIELD.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE DENIED THAT THE SOVIET IS AHEAD IN THE ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE FIELD.

HE ALSO DISPUTED CRITICISM THAT THERE HAD BEEN DECEPTION OR COVER-UP ON THE MOUNTING MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR COSTS OF THE VIETNAM WAR.

MCNAMARA SUPPLIED THESE COMMENTS TO NEWSMEN AS HE STEPPED OUTSIDE CLOSED SESSIONS OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE NEW RECORD BUDGET INCLUDED NEARLY HALF A BILLION DOLLARS TO CONTINUE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE U.S. SYSTEM FOR HUNTING AND DESTROYING ENEMY INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES.

THERE ALSO WAS \$375 MILLION TO START ACTUAL PRODUCTION OF THESE WEAPONS, BUT MCNAMARA STRESSED THAT THIS WOULD NEVER BE USED IF THE U.S. AND SOVIET RUSSIA CAN REACH AN AGREEMENT TO AVOID PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THEM.

MCNAMARA SAID THE AGREEMENT AIMED AT "DAMPENING DOWN ANY COSTLY AND WASTEFUL ESCALATION OF THE ARMS RACE."

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